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Yonkers City Hall  
Washington Park  
Yonkers  
Westchester County  
New York

HABS No. NY-382

P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

CITY HALL  
YONKERS, NEW YORKHAB  
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Yonkers City Hall, Westchester County, New York, is a prominent feature of the "down town" landscape. Located on a small hill at the northeast corner of South Broadway and the Nepperhan Arterial Highway, it overlooks the original business center and the most densely populated section of the city.

The 4 1/2 acre site, Washington Park, was acquired in 1899 from the Nisbet estate for \$90,000 for recreational park purposes. An Act of the State Legislature released it from this restriction and made it available for the construction of the Public Library in 1903, City Hall four years later, and the Health Center in 1929.

City Hall dominates the scene, standing in the center at the highest point, towering over the other two buildings. Pedestrians from South Broadway on the west side of the site must climb 80 steps to reach the front entrance of City Hall whose main axis is north-south. Automobile traffic enters the Park only from the Nepperhan Arterial on the South, winding around the Hall with very limited on-street parking for a few official cars. Public parking is in the Government Center Garage with 540 car spaces adjacent to City Hall to the East. City Hall is surrounded with green lawns and tall trees and an occasional flower bed. From every window on the Western side of the building, one sees, beyond the city streets, the majestic Palisades of the Hudson River.

The architect of City Hall, H. Lansing Quick (1870-1945), according to Henry F. Whitney's Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, "entered his father's office at the age of eighteen, became a member of the New York Chapter, A.I.A., in 1911, and practiced independently in Yonkers the rest of his life. Probably the best known examples of Mr. Quick's work were the City Hall and Public Library, Spring (Dayspring) Presbyterial Church, Halstead School, Strand Theatre, and a building for the Yonkers Electric Light Company... he served for several years as Vice President of the Yonkers Housing Administration. During the 1930's he was architect of a number of industrial buildings with the Habirshaw Cable & Wire Company's Plant in Yonkers, one of his most successful works".

The builder of City Hall was George T. Kelly who submitted his base bid of \$310,785 on August 1, 1907.

Ground was broken August 28, 1907 and construction carried on under the watchful eye of Samuel L. Cooper, Superintending Engineer, over the years 1907-10. It was not until 1912, however, that all

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the equipment used by the city in its first City Hall, Philipse Manor Hall on Warburton Avenue, was moved into place in the new location.

Frank E. Sanchis, architect-author of American Architecture: Westchester County, New York, published by William W. Cowan, The North River Press, 1977, writes, in part: "The Yonkers City Hall is designed in a non-academic Beaux Arts style. Both the Beaux Arts and the Neo-Classical Revival styles share the overall structural and proportional concepts of Classical Greek and Roman architecture. The Neo-Classical Revival style, however, is faithful to the Greek and Roman in detail as well, while the Beaux Arts style turns to elaborate Renaissance and Baroque details. The Neo-Classical Revival and the Beaux Arts styles are both characterized by symmetrical organization and axial plans". Sanchis further notes "the axiality, symmetry and detail, including the exuberant domed tower, the use of cartouches, the garlanded window lintels with shields on the top floor, and the heavily molded ornament at the base of the tower are in the Beaux Arts style. The proportional organization of the building, however, is not - hence the non-academic categorization".

The Yonkers Statesman for May 8, 1907 describes the building as "in the shape of an H with a frontage of 174 and a depth of 102 feet" with an elaborate tower and dome rising to 164 feet above the ground. It has an above-ground basement built of Concord granite topped by 3 1/2 stories of cream colored brick with window surrounds of cast terra-cotta. The tower, 26 feet square, shows clock faces 10 feet in diameter on all four sides.

In the Application for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, dated August 8, 1973, the building is described as "a Free interpretation of Neo-Baroque forms" and as having "a jewel-like quality in the urban environment". Further noted interior features: "The main entrance leads to a rotunda whose walls are faced with white marble and embellished with pilasters. Marble columns support a shallow molded and gilded dome. An elaborate inlaid pattern on the floor is formed by white, red and green marble tesserae. The ceiling coffered and decorated."

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"The Manager's Reception Room (on the first floor) has a heavily carved and molded mahogany dado decorated with shell and floral motifs. The ceiling is embellished with elaborately molded plaster decoration. A carved escutcheon decorates the marble mantle. Original brass fixtures remain in place."

"The Court Room and Council Room located on the fourth floor, are also elaborately ornamented". In each of these rooms whose dimensions measure 42 by 54 1/2 feet, the coffered ceiling is crowned with a shallow dome of opalescent stained glass, illuminated from above. In the center of the Court dome the allegorical figure of Justice appears in bronze bas-relief. Fine mahogany woodwork decorates each room and furnishes the Councilmen and City officials with handsome desks in the Council Room.

Above the dado in the Council Room there are 10 remarkably fine mural paintings representing local historical and allegorical scenes by Richard Vincent Adorente and A. E. Fortinger of New York City on commission of the Common Council in 1912. These artists were the winners of a competition offering \$10,000 for the best design to decorate the walls of the Council Room, the largest amount paid for such a purpose by any city of the size of Yonkers at that time.

As reported in the New York Times for April 28, 1912: "The competition was open to all artists in the U.S., and more than fifty entered. The jury that awarded the prize consisted of the Yonkers Municipal Art Commission, composed of Charles M. Israels, G. Howard Chamberlin, and Rudolf Eickemeyer."

"The Commission was advised by two artists named by President Blashfield of the National Society of Mural Decorators. They were John W. Alexander, President of the National Academy of Design, and Francis Jones."

There has been very little change in the interior arrangement of City Hall over the years. Most such work has been done to provide additional office space, conform with changes in the fire code and modernize the lighting.

In 1948 the city's Principal Architectural Engineer recommended removal of the tower because its deterioration represented a threat to life and property. Fortunately this emasculation did not take place. Subsequent years saw the complete repair and restoration not only of the tower, but of the entire building, interior and exterior.

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Incidentally, the Nomination of City Hall for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places makes the following observation: "Notable construction features are the steel trusses and poured concrete beams in the attic. These are documented by a series of photographs taken during the construction of City Hall which are now in the possession of The Hudson River Museum".

The above Nomination was made August 8, 1973 to the U.S. Department of the Interior (National Register of Historic Places) for recognition of Yonkers City Hall as historically important, and on February 6, 1981 to New York State's Division of Historic Preservation.

On June 1, 1972 the Yonkers Historical Society had already installed a bronze plaque in the lobby of City Hall inscribed: "Registered Yonkers Landmark - City Hall- Erected 1907-1910".

Many interesting history-making events mark the eight decades of the life of City Hall. The population of its constituency grew from 79,803 in 1910 to a little under 200,000 in 1981. Mayor-Council form of government saw a City Manager added in 1940. Yonkers celebrated its Tercentennial as a community in 1946, its Centennial as an incorporated city in 1972.

In the celebration of 1946 an interesting event was bringing 11 persons, almost the entire population of the namesake town of Yonkers, Oklahoma, to Yonkers, New York, by trailer for joint festivities.

Over the years a number of persons of world-wide importance have visited Yonkers City Hall. Suffice to mention only two: Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands and U.S. President Gerald R. Ford. During Yonkers' Year of History, 1959, the visit of Princess Beatrix called attention to the City's beginnings as a Dutch Trading Post. On October 13, 1976 President Ford signed the Federal Revenue Sharing Bill at City Hall, providing many millions of much needed dollars to cities across the country.

It is hoped that, for a long time to come, Yonkers City Hall will continue to stand proudly on its hilly site, presiding over the destinies of its people.

Prepared by Grinton I. Will  
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September 7, 1981

SOURCES

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2. Whitney, Henry F. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, Deceased. Los Angeles, Calif., 1956.
3. A Guide to the Gilded Age in Westchester, The Hudson River Museum.
4. Building - Structure Inventory Form, New York State Parks and Recreation Division for Historic Preservation, February 6, 1981.
5. Herald Statesman, Yonkers, New York, August 31, 1957; August 28, 1962.
6. National Register of historic Places. Inventory - Nomination Form, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, August 8, 1973.
7. Yonkers Historical Bulletin, "Yonkers Landmarks", Vol. XV. No. 2, July 1968.
8. Yonkers Statesman, Yonkers, New York. May 8, 1907.
9. New York Times, April 28, 1912, Pt. 9, p. 7, col. 5 "Awards \$10,000 Prize".

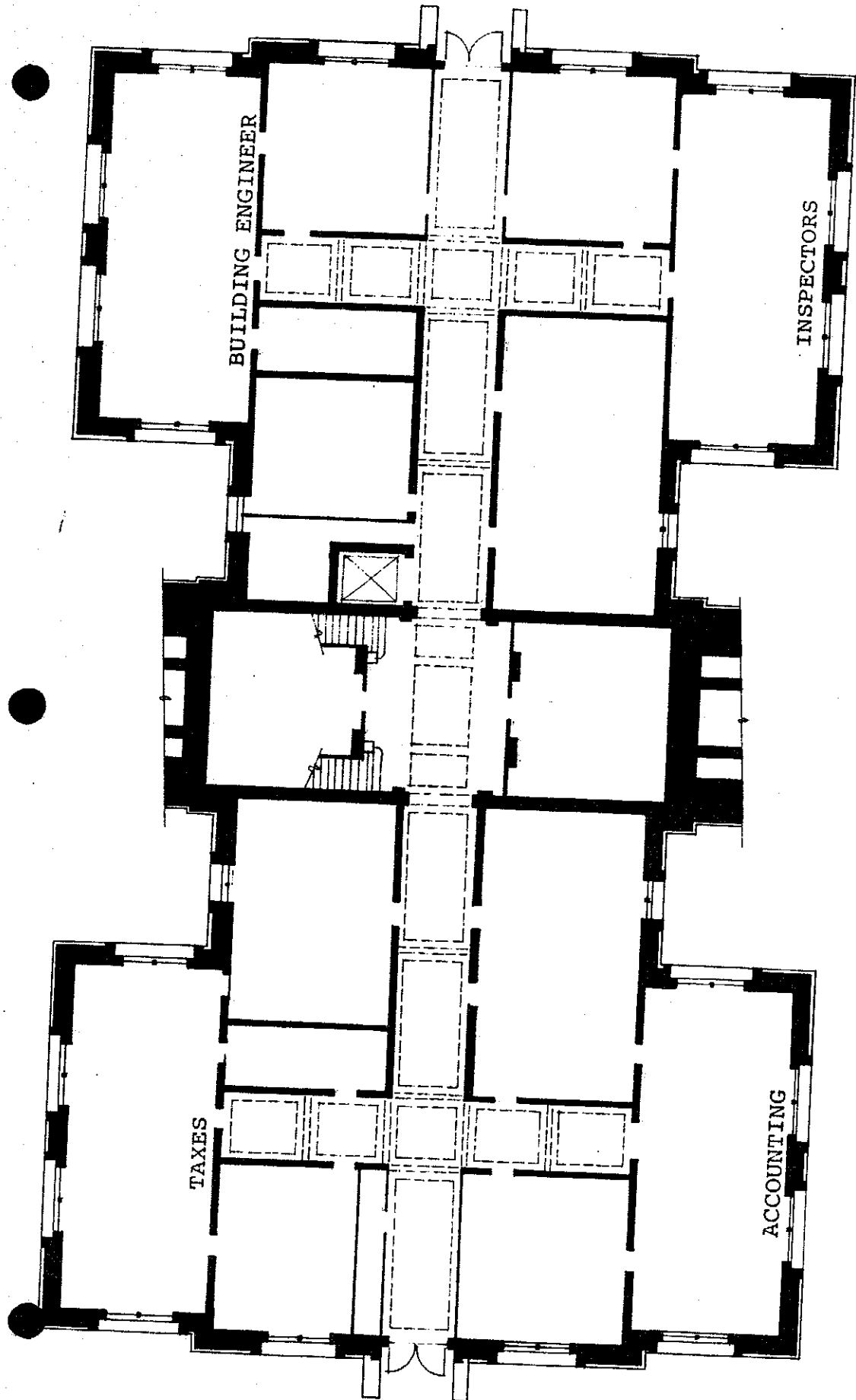
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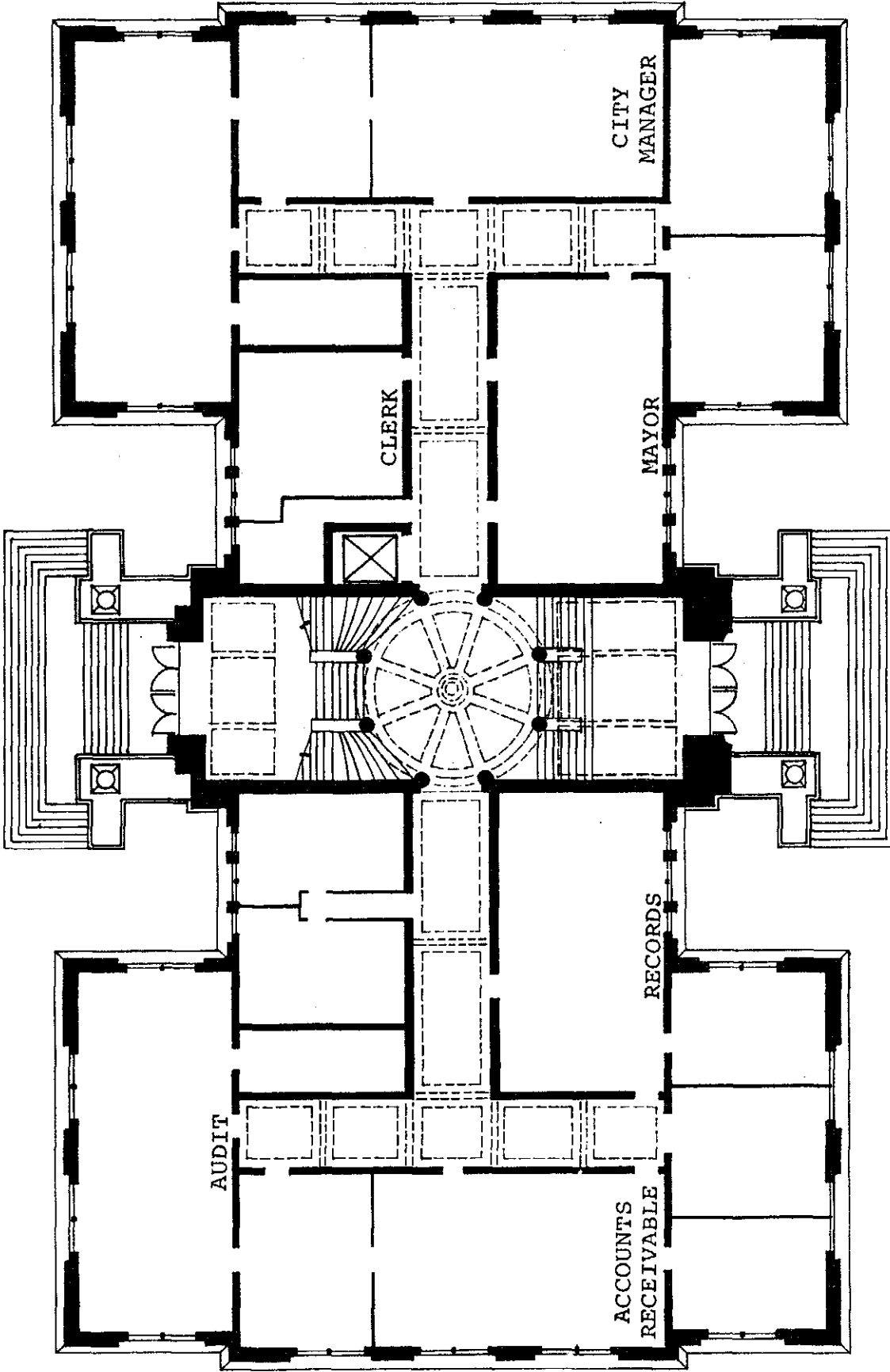
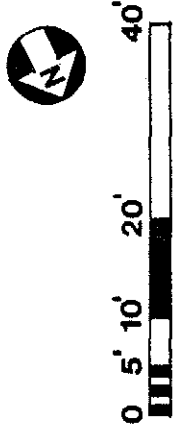
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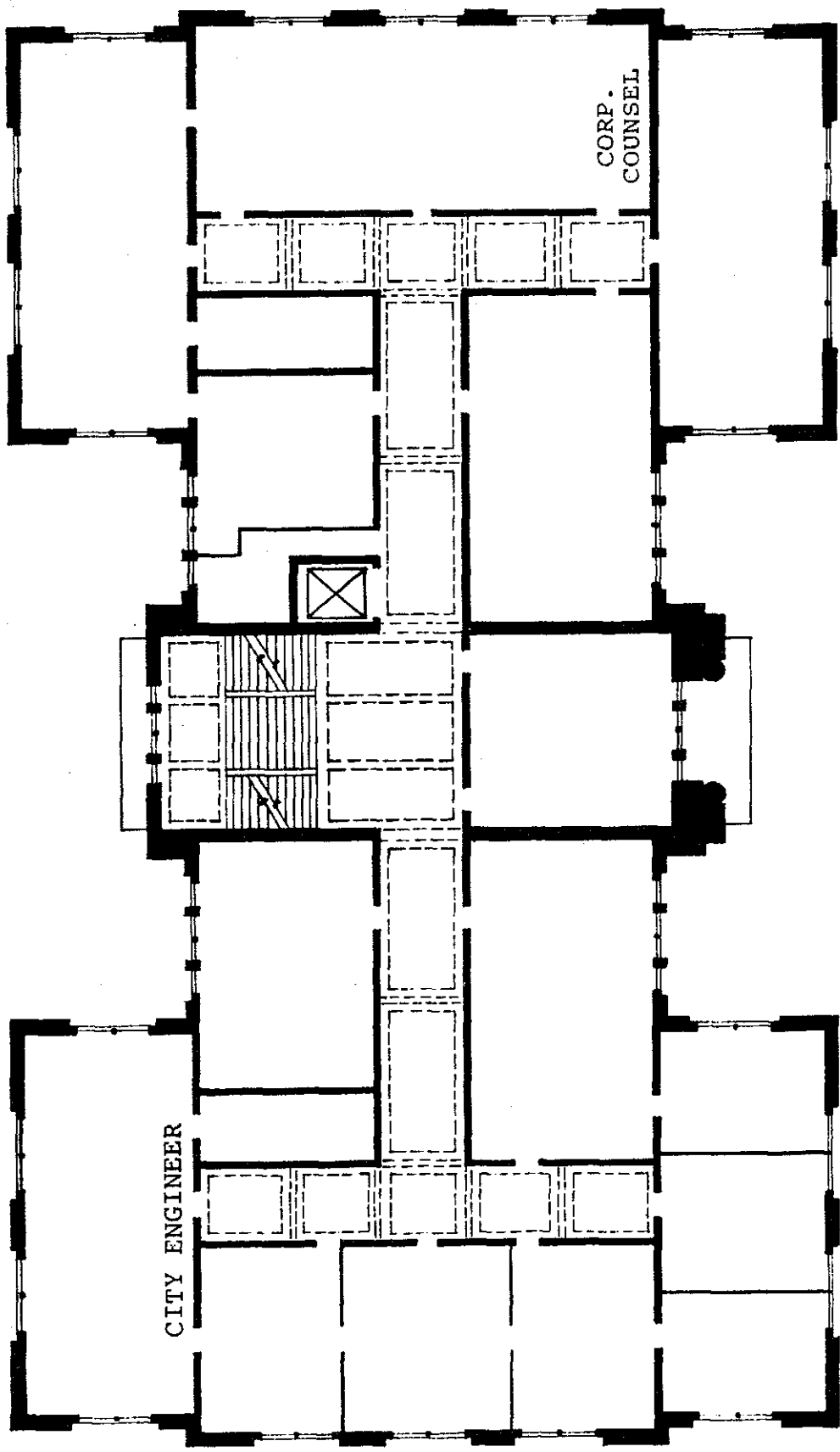


**CITY HALL, YONKERS, N.Y.**  
**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**



**CITY HALL, YONKERS, N.Y.**  
**SECOND FLOOR PLAN**





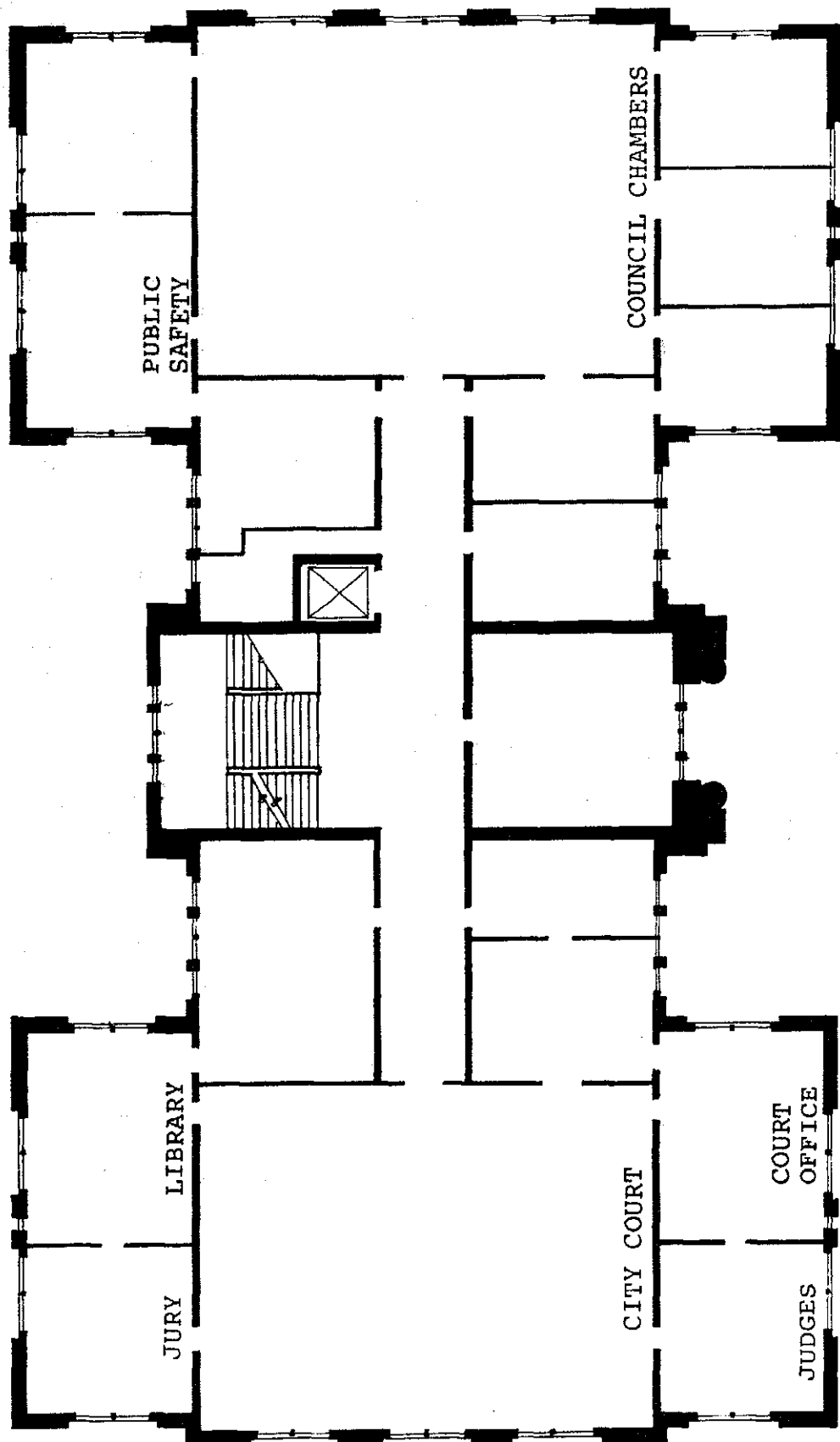
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**THIRD FLOOR PLAN**



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**FOURTH FLOOR PLAN**